

Alternatives to Culver Funding
for general, water pollution abatement activities

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Alternatives to CULVER Funding

The following table outlines potential alternative funding sources for CULVER allocations. Only one of the four options presented would require a public vote.

Alternative Funding Sources to Replace CULVER Funding		
Alternative Funding Option	Notes	Public Vote?
General fund	Would be recognized as an expense of general government.	no
Levy lid lift	Current rate = \$1.08814 per \$1,000 of assessed value with a \$1.80 maximum, approximately \$0.75 available next year.	yes
Endowment fund	Would require a one time contribution of ~ \$20 million to produce annual interest income equal to current (2007) CULVER allocation. (See discussion below for potential revenue sources.)	no
Flood Control Zone District Cooperative Watershed Management Funding	(RCW 39.34.190 and RCW 86.15.035) Ten percent of the revenue from a yet-to-be-created county-wide flood control zone district (FCZD) can be used toward "water supply, water quality and water resource and habitat protection and management."	no

Three options are being presented for consideration for the future of CULVER allocations:

Option 1 – STATUS QUO

- Maintain current CULVER allocations at 1.5 percent of the Wastewater operating budget. (By 2012, CULVER funds will amount to \$2.0 million with a \$600,000 increase accompanying the addition of the Brightwater and Carnation plant operating expenses.)

Option 2 - CAP

- Cap current CULVER allocations at 1.5 percent of 2007 Wastewater operating budget (\$1.435 million), with annual inflationary adjustments based on an established index. The cap will be reviewed at least every five years based on performance measure, wastewater revenue, and other factors. (Assuming an inflation rate of 3 percent by 2012, CULVER allocations would increase to \$1.664 million.)
- Review and adopt CULVER allocation policies (Appendix B) to determine applicant and project eligibility and/or determine levels of expenditure for types of water quality related activities (education, studies, monitoring, advertising for example). Performance measure requirements and the posting of an annual report on the Internet should be included.

Option 3 - REPLACE

- Discontinue CULVER allocations and its support for water quality activities.
- Replace CULVER funded activities with one of the other revenue sources described in this document.

Proposed CULVER Allocation Policies

- CULVER funds should only be allocated to projects that are located within the boundaries of the Wastewater Treatment Division's service area.
- Create earmarked categories of funding and assign percentage targets to meet per category per year. For example, annual allocations totaling 20-25 percent should be spent on education, ambient monitoring, scientific analysis and studies related to water quality.
- Establish a limit to the number of years a community or volunteer group can receive direct appropriations.
- Subject potential candidates for all CULVER funds to a technical and advisory board review process (as in place for Waterworks grants applications.)
- Exclude a candidate organization for funding if it will also receive a grant award from the Waterworks Grant Program in the same year.
- Establish a competitive process for the allocation of restoration maintenance work funding between Washington Conservation Corps and Earthcorps to ensure fiscal efficiency and maximize the use of King County funds.
- Initiate annual site visits and reports on the benefit of CULVER expenditures for the members of Council, the Regional Water Quality Committee and Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee.
- Require the development and implementation of performance measures to gauge the success of CULVER allocations.
- Further define the types of projects and services being supported and focus CULVER dollars either geographically or by type of activity. (Potentially linked to water quality and riparian condition data from Department of Natural Resources and Parks' environmental indicators / Shoreline Master Program habitat characterization work.)

28.86.120 Water quality protection policies (WQPP).

A. Explanatory materials. The water quality protection policies are intended to guide King County in identifying and resolving regional water quality issues, protecting public and environmental health and protecting the public's investment in wastewater facilities and water resource management. Research and analysis are required and will be used to evaluate water quality in county streams and other bodies of water within the service district.

B. Policies.

WQPP-1: King County shall participate in identifying and resolving water quality issues pertaining to public health and ecosystem protection in the region to ensure that the public's investment in wastewater facilities and water resource management programs is protected.

WQPP-2: King County shall evaluate the impacts and benefits of actions that affect the quality of the region's waters and identify measures to meet and maintain water quality standards.

WQPP-3: King County shall forecast future aquatic resource conditions that may affect wastewater treatment decisions and work cooperatively to identify cost-effective alternatives to mitigate water quality problems and enhance regional water quality.

WQPP-4: King County shall participate with its regional partners to identify methods, plans and programs to enhance water quality and water resources in the region.

WQPP-5: The King County executive shall implement a comprehensive water quality monitoring program of streams and water bodies that are or could be impacted by influent, effluent, sanitary system overflows or CSOs. The range of data to be gathered should be based on water pollutants and elements that scientific literature identifies as variables of concern, what is needed to substantiate the benefits of abating combined sewer overflows and what is required by state and federal agencies. The executive shall submit summary reports and comprehensive reviews of this information to the King County council as outlined in K.C.C. 28.86.165.

WQPP-6: King County shall implement and maintain water quality, monitoring, evaluating and reporting programs to support the national pollutant discharge elimination system for wastewater and other permit applications, and ensure permit compliance.

WQPP-7: King County shall actively participate in the development of water quality laws, standards and program development to ensure cost-effective maintenance or enhancement of environmental and public health.

WQPP-8: King County shall assess the risk to human health and the environment from wastewater treatment and conveyance activities, and use this information in evaluating water pollution abatement control options. (Ord. 15384 § 2, 2006: Ord. 13680 § 12, 1999).